

CLAIM SET AS AMENDED

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling stacked units of boards comprising a stacker carrier capable of moving a plurality of stacked units placed on a support bed in a storage area into storage stacks and off from said storage stacks, respectively, having lift units adapted to the opposite sides of said stacker carrier, each of said lift units ~~having~~ including:

a load support member extending lengthwise from one end of the lift unit to the other,
~~which is the load support member being~~ rotatably mounted on pivot shafts and being
individually movable and arranged to cooperate so as to elevate/lower the stacked units of
boards resting on said support bed; and,

~~wherein the apparatus further comprises~~ actuators mounted on each of the lift units
for enabling the load support members of the lift units to rotate about the pivot shafts
between a transfer position and a home position.

2. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the support bed includes mating members for locking the support bed to the lift units at least for the duration of a lifting operation.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said load support members and said mating members are provided with interlocking mating shapes.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said support members is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, said plurality of lift elements being a plurality of lift chains, and wherein said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by at least one drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit, and the others are so-called slave drive units.

7. (Previously Presented) A support bed according to claim 1, wherein at least two opposite edges of the support bed are provided with mating members capable of locking said support members of said lift units to said support bed.

8. (Previously Presented) A support bed according to claim 1, wherein said mating members of said support bed are formed by bracket edges slanted downward by an angle from the horizontal plane.

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim **2**, wherein said load support members and said mating members are provided with interlocking mating shapes.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim **2**, wherein each of said support members is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim **3**, wherein said each of support members is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim **2**, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim **3**, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

16. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

17. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said plurality of lift elements is a plurality of lift chains.

20. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the lift units further comprise roller members adapted to run on columnar legs.

21. (New) An apparatus for handling stacked units of boards comprising a stacker carrier capable of moving a plurality of stacked units placed on a support bed in a storage area into storage stacks and off from said storage stacks, respectively, the stacker carrier having lift units adapted to the opposite sides thereof, each of the lift units including:

a pair of pivot shafts disposed at upper end portions of each of the lift units;

a load support member being rotatably mounted on the pair of pivot shafts and being individually movable and arranged to cooperate for elevating/lowering the stacked units of boards resting on the support bed;

a pair of actuators mounted on each of the lift units for enabling the load support member to rotate about the pair of pivot shafts between a transfer position and a home position; and.

at least one pair of roller members provided at the upper end portions of each of the lift units adjacent to the pair of pivot shafts, the roller members adapted to run up and down on columnar legs of the apparatus.